



PRIME MINISTER

For Press

20 JULY 1978

PROGRAMME FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The World Community is this year commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Prime Minister said today that as a consequence of a decision by the Government earlier in the year he was now approaching State Premiers to seek their participation in a programme of domestic activities to mark the anniversary.

Mr Fraser observed that this anniversary comes at a time when there is growing international recognition of the importance of fundamental human rights. The world-wide outcry in recent days against the trials of Soviet dissidents, and the harsh sentences imposed on them, is a clear demonstration of this and serves to bring home the importance of doing all we can to promote understanding of, and adherence to, the principles expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We in Australia, he said, have a record on human rights we can be justly proud of and over the years successive Australian Governments have actively contributed to the work of the United Nations in the promotion and protection of internationally recognised human rights. Australia commenced a three year term on the UN Commission on Human Rights at the beginning of this year.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has become a most highly regarded document and the Prime Minister said he believed that governments have a role to play in promoting public awareness of its universal significance. It is the Government's intention to demonstrate, by means of a domestic programme, that Australia reaffirms its commitment to the human rights standards that the international community has aspired to uphold for the past thirty years.

Accordingly, the Commonwealth is embarking on a programme designed to make available to the community at large, information on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its significance to Australia.

Discussion kits are being prepared for school children and ethnic and Aboriginal organisations throughout Australia. The kits will include a copy of the Declaration; as well translations of the Declaration in over fifty languages spoken by ethnic communities in Australia are to be made available.

The explanatory material in the discussion kit will focus on the Declaration as a document which reflects the international community's aspirations.

The Prime Minister said that an explanation of Australia's Racial Discrimination Act is to be translated into the languages of Australia's migrant communities. An explanation is also to be translated into the main Aboriginal dialects spoken in the Northern Territory, and distributed Australia-wide on cassettes for Aboriginal communities where these languages are in use. It is also proposed to circulate an explanation of the Racial Discrimination Act in similar form in English, both in conjunction with, and independently of the cassettes.

Mr Fraser commented that he was writing to the State Premiers seeking their participation in aspects of the programme of relevance to them.
